

My Ordination Service

I'll never forget the incredible sense of awe that washed over me during my ordination ceremony some 30 years ago. As I knelt before the Lord, and hundreds of people, my bishop anointed my head with oil, prayed over me, and ordained me to "Word, Sacrament, and Order." Even after many years of academic and spiritual preparation, I felt entirely unworthy of this affirmation as I wondered (sometimes still do) why God called me, the original chucklehead, into such a high calling. As the "Prince of preachers" Charles Spurgeon once said, "If God calls you to be a minister, don't stoop to becoming a king" (Khari Willis-retiring from NFL for ministry). The best I can conclude is that if God can use Balaam's donkey to do his work, there is hope for me (Numbers 22:28-30). As we continue our "Supernatural Church" series based on the Book of Acts let's look at the first, at one of the biggest challenges the early church had to take on. Let's go to Acts 1:12-26.

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem (after the Ascension) from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. 15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 16 and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus— 17 he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." 18 (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. 19 Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, "'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, " 'May another take his place of leadership.' 21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." 23 So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

About Judas

Jesus had just ascended into the clouds leaving behind two amazing promises: 1) That he'd return sometime in the future, and 2) he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The eleven disciples, along with another 109 followers, return to Jerusalem to await these promises. While there, Peter, the leader of the group, reminds the squad that the first order of business is to fill the leadership vacancy left by Judas, who, as everyone knows, was the original Benedict Arnold, i.e., the quintessential, "when-leaders-go-bad-they-really-go-bad" disciple. Although he met a tragic demise, whereas he tried to commit suicide by hanging himself but somehow the rope or branch broke off, and he ended up, literally, spilling out his guts on the jagged rocks below. His ignominious ending reminds us that he couldn't do anything right, justice is best served cold, and of all the wrong-headed things we might do in life, never let betraying the Son of God be one of them.

Replacing Judas: Two Requirements

Peter explains that it is necessary he be replaced. For theological and practical reasons there must be, moving forward, 12 apostles, not eleven. He states two requirements for finding Judas' successor: (1) He must have been with Jesus from the beginning, i.e., since John baptized him in the Jordan River, i.e., the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and (2) He must have been an eyewitness to Jesus' resurrection. Why such requirements? To ensure the integrity and continuity of the Gospel Message before it was catapulted into the world.

Joseph or Matthias

Of the many followers assembled in the Upper Room that day only two candidates emerge: Joseph (a.k.a. Barsabbas, Son of Sabbath) and Matthias. Peter and the rest go into prayer mode (a core habit before making major decisions). I love how Peter starts the prayer, "Lord, you know everyone's heart" (v24). Yes, Jesus knows who wants to be in ministry for the perks and prestige and who wants to earnestly expand the Kingdom of God.

After the prayer meeting is over, they "cast lots" (26). On the surface, this action sounds superstitious, but it was the standard practice for fulfilling offices/positions in the Temple precincts. This ancient lot-casting practice emanates from Proverbs 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." Names of the candidates were written on small stones and placed in a vessel which was then shaken (not stirred lol). Whoever's stone plopped out first was chosen (run our elections this

way?). Regardless of this unusual tool of discernment, Matthias wins without a recount (nor recall lol)!

Importance of Leadership

“Leadership is important” so says, Captain Understatement. Indeed, in many ways, it’s the most important thing in the life of the church, and perhaps everywhere else. As leadership guru John Maxwell likes to tell it, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” Paul talks about the leadership gift in Romans 12:6, 8

**We all have different gifts, according to the grace given us...
if it is leadership, let him lead diligently.**

When we boil it all down, people with the supernatural gift of leadership cooperate with the Holy Spirit to bring into reality the most significant part of Jesus’ prayer “Model Prayer,” “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In other words, they create the culture of heaven on earth. So, let’s take a quick survey. Who has the supernatural gift of leadership? If you do, lead! Who doesn’t have the gift of leadership? If you don’t, follow! By that I mean, pray for and support what the Lord is saying and doing through your local church leadership.

Conclusion

Before we anoint Bay Point’s supernaturally gifted leaders, let’s double back to the two requirements Matthias fulfilled to become the 12th apostle: (1) Been with Jesus from the start of his public ministry and (2) Personally witness his resurrection. Although some of us may be old enough to have literally met these requirements, let’s apply the principle behind them. 1) Is with Jesus, as in a vibrant and daily walk with him which carries a deep desire as Paul stated in Philippians 3:10, “To know Christ in the power of his resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings” 2) Places his entire hope on the physical resurrection of Jesus. This 2nd requirement is imperative because it is the most catalytic, transformative, and joyful, of all the hopes we have in the Christian life!

I have always believed that the church’s greatest need is for leaders. So, if you feel are gifted for leadership please go to our app or website, take the gift survey, and let me know the results. One thing I know for sure, leaders is they are happiest when leading something!

Supernatural leaders, come on up now and let's prayer over you and anoint you with oil so that you might cooperate with the Holy Spirit to create heaven's culture on earth through Bay Point church.